

# ANGELS REJOICING

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Luke 2:8 – 20

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“And suddenly there was the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest. And on earth, peace, goodwill to men.’”

The story of the angels singing on the Bethlehem hillsides is such a wonderful part of the Christmas story. It fills out minds with all sorts of images; a scene where we wish we could have been there.

We don’t know too much about angels, but there are a lot of references to them throughout Scripture, from the very first chapters of Genesis right through to the last book of the Bible.

There is a mystery about them. Their description in the Bible is out of this world and powerful. It is not surprising that God would warn us about not worshipping them.

The Apostle John was awed by an angel, and when the imposing being spoke to him, here is what John writes.

**Revelation 19:10** At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

“A fellow servant with you and your brothers”!!

There is no doubt that they play a significant part in the God’s interaction with man. And to understand them a little better is to understand better their place in the Christmas story.

## 1. THEY WERE THERE AT THE BEGINNING

- a. The beginning of rebellion
  - i. They would have seen the shocking rebellion of Lucifer.
  - ii. It would have been an unbelievable moment for them.
  - iii. And some of the angels followed Lucifer in his arrogant rebellion.
  - iv. Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”  
Luke 10:18
- b. The devastation at Eden

- i. They would have seen with horror Satan sneak his way into the hearts of Adam and Eve, deceiving them.
- ii. They would have cried out, “No! No!”
- iii. They were then called then to guard the gates of the Garden to prevent an even worse tragedy.

c. The formidable battle

- i. They took part in the formidable battle with Satan, who was battling to prevent mankind from hearing the truth from God.
- ii. There is the sobering story from Daniel, who was overcome with grief when he was told about the total devastation sin would bring upon the land. His agony and weeping went on for days, crying out to God for answers, until finally the angel from God showed up and told Daniel this:

**Daniel 10:12 -14** “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. [13] But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. [14] Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”

## 2. THEIR RESPECT AND HONOUR OF GOD

- a. These were the angels who had respect and honour and praise for God.
  - i. **Revelation 5:11** Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne ... [12] In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” [13] ... “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”
  - ii. **Psalms 148:1** Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights above. [2] Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

- b. The multitude of the faithful
  - i. “thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand,” we read.
  - ii. **Psalm 68:17** The chariots of God are tens of thousands, and thousands of thousands;
- c. Rejoicing in God’s plan
  - i. When God created the earth for His purpose and set the boundaries, we read “the angels shouted for joy”.
  - ii. Not just amazed at His creation, but they saw His plan.
  - iii. So on numerous occasions they interacted with God’s chosen people
    - 1. Jacob
    - 2. The children of Israel
    - 3. The angel who stopped Balaam’s donkey
    - 4. Gideon
    - 5. Elijah
    - 6. Just to name a few
  - iv. They were servants of God helping us in our battle for truth and righteousness – partners with us in the battle against Satan and evil.

### 3. AND THEN DELIVERENCE BEGINS

- a. Announcement to Mary
  - i. Assigned to make the announcement to Mary.
  - ii. **Luke 1:26** God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, [27] to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. [28] Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you! " [29] Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. [30] "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! [31] You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.
  - iii. Think of the joy Gabriel would have had at finally announcing what people had long waited for.
  - iv. The main act of God was now beginning
- b. Instructions to Joseph
  - i. An angel assigned to Joseph, helping him to understand Mary’s pregnancy, and he said to him.
  - ii. **Matthew 1:20** “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the

Holy Spirit. [21] She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

- c. And then the burst of exuberance to the shepherds
  - i. Now God the Son had entered the earth as a man, born of a women, and the angels rejoiced with exuberance to announce to the shepherd,
  - ii. **Luke 2:10** “behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. [11] “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12] “And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: [14] “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”
  - iii. They were part of the thrill of that moment.
  - iv. I imagine they could hardly wait until mankind would hear what God is doing!!

#### 4. THEIR TENDER CARE

- a. After Jesus’ temptation
  - i. **Matthew 4:11** Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.
  - ii. They took care of him after the stress of the temptation.
- b. The agony in the Garden
  - i. Jesus was in anguish
  - ii. **Luke 22:43** An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.
- c. Tender caring for God’s children
  - i. **Matthew 18:10** “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”
    1. Think of the care these angels give to the abused and aborted children
    2. Jesus is referring not only to little children, but those who are “children” in their faith.
    3. We face the struggles, but our angels (Jesus said “their angels”) look to the face of God for directions of how they are to serve their person of responsibility.

- ii. There is another example of their care. Jesus told the story of Lazarus, the poor beggar who begged at the home of the rich man.  
**Luke 16:22** “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side.  
What tenderness is here.
- iii. Think of the care there is for us. We are told that they are watching.
- iv. They were there to make sure God’s plan moved forward
  - 1. They told the women at the tomb
  - 2. They freed Peter from prison
  - 3. They told Philip about the Ethiopian

## 5. CELEBRATING THE VICTORY

- a. In the salvation of the lost
  - i. Luke 15:10 **In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”**
  - ii. They rejoice over what God is doing
- b. The joyful assembly
  - i. The writer of the Book of Hebrews tells us how frightened Moses was at the awesome presence of God at Mount Sinai. But when we come to our home with God, the scene will be that of angels rejoicing and welcoming us.
  - ii. **Hebrews 12:21** **The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.” [22] But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, [23] to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.**
  - iii. What a welcome that will be.
- c. Finally home!
  - i. They have a role in the final call of Jesus to bring all His children home.
  - ii. The angels will be gathering up the believers and bringing them Home.
  - iii. Jesus said, **(Matthew 24:30)** **And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power**

and great glory. [31] And he will send out his angels with the mighty blast of a trumpet, and they will gather his chosen ones from all over the world –from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.

- Angels are earnestly cheering us on, wanting us to trust in God.
- They have seen what devastation evil brings, and they are anxious for us to find life in God's plan of salvation for us.
- They are guarding us from evil, but still letting us choose what we will believe.
- Their part of the nativity story is a message they want us to hear again and again:

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. [11] For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. [12] And this *shall be* a sign unto you; You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, [14] Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. **Luke 2:10 - 14**